

This Week In Agriculture

February 28, 2006

March 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Upcoming events

National Alfalfa Alliance's Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar in St. Louis. March 7-8. More information at www.alfalfa.org.

Western Regional Ag Ed meeting and Western Regional Ag in the Classroom meeting. March 18-22 in Boise. Call 334-3216 for more information.

2006 University of Idaho Extension Annual Conference. April 3-6 in Idaho Falls. Call 529-8376 for information.

75th FFA State Leadership Conference. April 6-8 in Twin Falls. Call 334-3216 for information.

This Week in Agriculture is a publication of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

To submit articles or subscribe to this newsletter, email rmason@idahoag.us

Deadline is March 15 to sign up for AGR-Lite insurance program

Idaho producers have until March 15 to sign up for an important federal insurance program that can help protect them in the event of a loss of revenue.

AGR-Lite can protect farming operations against low revenue in the event of natural disasters and market fluctuations.

The program is based

on a five-year average of farm revenue.

The program was recently improved to offer up to \$1 million in coverage as well as providing broader insured causes of loss. Many commodities not eligible for other crop insurance plans can be covered under AGR-Lite. In fact, most farm-raised crops, animals and animal

products are eligible for protection.

Insurance agents sell this product, so contact yours for more information. You can also see a list of crop insurance agents on the USDA's Risk Management Agency website: <http://www3.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents>.

ISDA finds bird, animal seed containing noxious weed seed

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture has ordered two dozen companies to stop the sale of bird and other animal feeds that contain viable noxious weed seeds.

A routine sampling of animal feed products revealed that several manufacturers have been distributing feed to stores throughout Idaho contaminated with noxious weed seed. Most of the products containing the noxious weed seed were domestic or wild bird feed mixes, but some were also feeds for hamsters, gerbils and squirrels.

The sale of feeds containing noxious weeds poses a major threat to the state's ability to control the spread of noxious weeds. The state already spends millions of dollars a year combating noxious weeds.

Over the last several

months the department has sampled 92 feeds from 34 manufacturers. Idaho State Seed Lab tests concluded that 54 of the 92 seed-type feed samples contained viable noxious weed seeds, including Buffalobur, Jointed Goatgrass, Field Bindweed, Johnsongrass, Canada Thistle and Hoary Cress.

The seeds that tested positive came from 24 bird seed manufacturers.

"Noxious weeds are costly to our recreation and agriculture industries. It is important that people involved do their part to control and prevent the spread of noxious weeds," said Pat Takasugi, director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

All of the companies have been notified and several companies have already begun work on additional cleaning techniques that can

be used to detect and eliminate noxious weed seeds from each animal feed batch. Retail establishments have also assisted the department in the detection and elimination of potentially undesirable products from the Idaho market. The department will be reviewing each company's case over the coming months to determine what level of regulatory action may be warranted. State law allows ISDA to issue a warning letter or assess a civil penalty. There are 36 weeds on the state's noxious weeds list. The weeds are considered noxious because they destroy wildlife habitat, crowd out beneficial native plants, create fire hazards, poison humans and livestock, and spoil recreation sites, including bike paths, lakes and rivers. More at <http://www.idahoweedawareness.org/>

Industry news

Idaho foodsize trout (trout 12 inches and longer) sales during 2005 totaled \$35.3 million, up 3 percent from the \$34.3 million in 2004, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The number of foodsize fish sold was 44.0 million, up 13 percent from the 39.0 million sold a year ago.

Commercial red meat production at Idaho packing plants for January 2006 totaled 23.5 million pounds, up 4 percent from last year according to the NASS. January production was up 20 percent from the 19.6 million pounds produced in December.

NASS reports that cattle on feed for the slaughter market in Idaho from feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 or more head on February 1, 2006 totaled 265,000 head, down 2 percent from the February 1, 2005 inventory.

The inventory was down 4 percent from the number on hand January 1, 2006. Placements of cattle into State feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 or more head during January totaled 46,000 head, up 9,000 head from January 2005 placements.

Kempthorne: Exports top \$3.2 billion in 2005

Governor Dirk Kempthorne has announced that exports of the state's goods and services in 2005 exceeded \$3.2 billion and that China has become the state's top trading partner for the first time.

Riding another significant wave in sales of Idaho's high tech products, 2005 marks the second time state exports topped \$3 billion. In 2000, export sales topped \$3.5 billion.

"We have been aggressive in our efforts to expand opportunities for Idaho businesses and these numbers reflect our great success story in our continued efforts to sell Idaho goods and services around the world," Kempthorne said. "Our trade missions to Asia and Mexico have opened doors for Idaho exports and built relationships that are producing amazing results."

The last time an Asian nation was the state's top trading partner was 1997

when Japan purchased nearly \$327 million in goods.

China and several other Asian countries have been a major focus of Governor Kempthorne's trade missions. Since taking office in 1999, Kempthorne has led three trade missions to Asia and four to Mexico.

Idaho has trade offices in Shanghai, China; Taipei, Taiwan; Guadalajara, Mexico and a representative office in South Korea.

A number of food and agricultural goods saw export increases including a more than 15 percent increase in vegetables, grains, seeds and fruit and a nearly 30 percent increase in dairy, eggs and honey. Overall, interna-



**Governor
Kempthorne**

tional sales of food and agricultural goods dipped slightly from \$339 million in 2004 to \$333 million in 2005.

"The success we're having in China is a direct result of Governor Dirk Kempthorne's trade missions," Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi said. "He has opened so many opportunities for Idaho agriculture. From the governor's efforts, the industry benefits, and so does the state's economy."

The governor's office website contains a list of Idaho commodities being exported and their ranking.

The site also contains a list of countries, a ranking an dollar value of the exports from Idaho going back to 2003. To learn more about exports from Idaho, our trade with other countries and the types of commodities being shipped overseas, go to

<http://www.gov.idaho.gov>

Company with unique Idaho product has new name

Rigby, Idaho-based Silver Creek Distillers, the only producer of potato vodka in the US, has recently changed its name to Distilled Resources.

Distilled Resources began in 1988 as Silver Creek Distillers with the purchase of a dilapidated fuel-alcohol plant in Idaho. After years of engineering

and inventing, Idaho potato vodka was on the shelves in 1992.

Over the years Distilled Resources has developed many strategic relationships and created many custom alcohols beyond potato vodka including soy vodka, rice vodka, and the United States's only certified organic vodka.

You may recognize some of its products as Blue Ice Potato Vodka, Teton Glacier Potato Vodka, Spudka, Liquid Ice Organic Vodka, and Kingston Gin – just to name a few. To learn more about Distilled Resources go to <http://www.waytogoidaho.com>.